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ABSTRACT

The Lancaster (PA) school district is working with the Chamber of Commerce and industry to bring resource persons into classrooms and to provide staff for adult career retraining. Program objectives include identifying areas for school/community interaction and mutual gain. Partnership benefits are shared among business, community and schools: to business the benefits range from a better understanding of education to opportunities for program development for employees; (2) to community they range from a healthy educational environment to an attraction for new people, business, and industry; and (3) to schools they range from sponsors for events such as afterschool projects to assistance for students in developing job related skills. In return for community expertise, the district offers executive writing sessions and apprenticeship work, among other programs. A list of partnerships formalized since 1983 concludes the paper. (KS)

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D-68 Tapping Community Resources to Enrich your Schooling

Partners-In-Education

Good Morning:

To me, this is one of the most exciting times to be in public education. Because of some of the recent national studies, and I am referring to the Commission on Excellence Report and the Carnegie Study: there is now a public awareness and interest in public education that we haven't known for the past several decades. We need to capitalize on this interest. We need to share with the public what is right about our schools, and it is my feeling that there are many things that are right about public education. I welcome this opportunity to share with you some ideas and things that we are doing in The School District of Lancaster as we work with our community and particularly with the business sector.

It may seem unusual to see the vice-president of a local business firm teaching the foundations of our free enterprise system to a junior high school class. It may seem equally unique to see a classroom of adults from a local business firm being guided through the stages of advanced computer literacy. Bringing community resource people into classrooms and buildings is an excellent way to prepare today's youngster more effectively for a future which holds perhaps six job changes. Providing staff and facilities for career retraining is a way to help our adult community adapt to the arrival of the information age. Mutual exchanges of expertise and facilities between a school system and its community insure not only a healthy rapport between the two, but the future survival of that community. This effort to bring the schools and the community closer together is what Partners-In-Education is all about.

Partners-In-Education began as a joint venture on the part of The School District of Lancaster and The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to address the needs of a changing society. The School District of Lancaster has always had as its theme "putting kids first", and feels that everyone from parents to teachers and community leaders have a stake in education -- one that emphasizes but extends beyond the basics of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Strengthening the partnership with the private sector has been one of our district goals for the last several years. This

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feeling has been underscored by the President's recent emphasis on decentralization and giving local autonomy to educational funding and planning, as well as, the subsequent encouragement of the private sector to become more involved in the educational community. The goal of our endeavor is to develop a closer working relationship which will be mutually beneficial to students and the community.

The concept of The School District of Lancaster's Partners-In-Education program had its inception at the National School Board's Association Convention in 1982. Members of the Board of Directors and Superintendents in attendance at the convention attended workshops related to this concept. Upon returning to the district, the topic was discussed and plans were developed to formalize many already existing relationships with the community. Informal involvement with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry began in the fall of 1982. A joint committee working with the chamber began in the winter of 1982. Definition of procedures and program start-up was accomplished in the summer of 1983. The display booth at the September, 1983 Lancaster County Business Expo marked the culmination of months of planning for the district's formal outreach to the community. A valuable highlight of the Expo was that it afforded the district the opportunity to share its program with 82 other exhibitors as well as visitors from other school districts. The School District of Lancaster's Partners-In-Education program enables business, industry and other community resources to take advantage of the expertise available within the district. In addition, businesses will help to provide supplementary opportunities that would not otherwise be available to students. A partnership packet has been prepared that describes the program goals and the types of involvement that are possible.

Our Goal:

To develop a close working relationship with the community which will prove to be mutually beneficial to the schools and the community.

Objectives:

1. To identify areas in which the schools and the community may interact in a way to be of benefit to both parties.
2. To establish the process to be followed in developing the partnerships between the schools and the community.
3. To implement the process to establish the partnership between the schools and the community.

What does a partnership offer business and industry? Partnerships benefit the business community in many ways. A few examples of the benefits are:

1. Promote better understanding of the educational program.
2. Promote more opportunities for business to share expertise with the schools.
3. Promote increased prestige in the community.

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4. Provide positive effects on employees' morale as they participate.
5. Provide for early identification of future employees.
6. Provides greater input into the decision-making process in education.
7. Provides opportunities to have programs developed to meet the needs of employees.

What does the partnership offer the community? Partnerships benefit the community in many ways. Examples of the benefits are:

1. Promotes a healthy educational environment.
2. Promotes a better understanding of the school and education.
3. Promotes a better understanding of the diversity of the community.
4. Provides opportunities for continued specialized education.
5. Provides an attraction for new people, business and industry.

What does the partnership offer the schools? Partnerships benefit the schools in many ways. A few examples are:

1. Provides sponsors for events such as after school projects, field experiences, contest, etc.
2. Provides extra opportunities for students with special needs or special talents.
3. Provides tutoring assistance.
4. Provides role models for students in the schools.
5. Provides better understanding of the business community on the part of the schools.
6. Provides opportunities for additional services to the community by the schools.
7. Assists students in the development of job related skill.

An important feature of The School District of Lancaster's partnership program is that it offers something back to the community in return for the expertise that it is requesting. For example, the district is currently offering the following types of programs:

1. Executive writing sessions.
2. Training of clerical staff.
3. Citizenship training.
4. Adult education.
5. Apprenticeship work.
6. Advisory groups for business and industry.
7. Computer literacy.

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8. Facility usage.
9. Research resources.
10. Educational assistance for employees and business.
11. Other individual tailored programs upon request.

Potential partners with The School District of Lancaster may wish to provide resources in one of the following areas:

1. Volunteers.
2. Adopt-a-school or adopt-a-program.
3. Hands-on-experience for students.
4. Career activities.
5. Understanding the free enterprise system.
6. Released time or loaned personnel.
7. Gifts or material or money.
8. Career internships for students.
9. Work experience internships for staff.
10. Other individually tailored programs.

In many respects, our partnership is unique. Clearly we place a great deal of importance upon the mutual exchange of expertise between our district and the community. We take pride in the fact that we can provide resources to our community. Secondly, on a nationwide scale, we are one of the few smaller school districts embarking on this endeavor. Most successful partnership programs exist in large cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta and Detroit. For that reason, The Center for Public Resources in New York is studying our program with the possibility of using it as a model. At this time I would like to highlight our existing partnerships formalized since August of 1983:

1. Foltz-Wessinger, Inc. provided a two-fold partnership. The first partnership furnished the logo which identifies the program. The second is to provide personnel who will help to organize a public relations effort for McCaskey High School.
2. Mr. Richard Kline of K & W Tire Company donated a sum of money which was appropriated in the following manner:
   a. To furnish 32 hand-held calculators for a class of 5/6 grade students at King Elementary School.
   b. To sponsor a business basics class (provided by Junior Achievement, Inc.) in a sixth grade class at Burrowes Elementary School.
3. Junior Achievement, Inc. has provided instructors for project business

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in two junior high schools. Executives from local businesses teach the fundamentals of the free enterprise system. The district, on the other hand, is providing space for two Junior Achievement evening classes to work.

4. Penn Advertising has supplied the district with the use of billboards.

In summary, I believe the school district that will be successful today, will be the one that works closely with and involves the community and private sector.